

LrdRas.

Date: Fri, 4 Sep 1998 20:57:16 EDT
From: LrdRas@aol.com
Subject: SC - Flour as Thickener

In a message dated 9/4/98 9:42:26 AM Eastern Daylight Time, alm4@cornell.edu writes:

<< it sounds too much like using flour to me, and I remember my mother always telling me using flour to thicken can make something taste awful. >>

Without sounding disrespectful to your dear mother, I would suggest that if she used flour and it tasted 'awful' then she was probably not cooking it long enough after the flour was added. Using cornstarch and arrowroot as a thickener only needs a minute more or less to cook and thicken. Flour needs several minutes to cook and loose it's raw taste.

Another problem may have been the amount of flour she used when she had her 'bad' experience; as well as the pre-preperation of the thickener. Flour is used at approximately 1 tblsp per cup of liquid. You should also make a thin paste of the flour and water, milk or broth making sure you have no lumps. Slowly pour the mixture in to the boiling pan of liquid. REDUCE the heat to a simmer and leave, stirring frequently until thickened..

Personally , I prefer using flour when thickening meat gravies and use cornstarch for puddings and fruit dishes on most occasions..I have never been a fan of arrowroot because I find it makes for a poor thickener when compared to the others. It's main advantage is that you can add it to the pan in it's dry state without worrying about lumps in your sauce. ;-) Rice flour is workable and I always use it in period recipes that call for it. Each type of thickener has it's place. :-)

A side thought on the 'cornflour' discussion. I went to Fresh Life after work today and bought both cornstarch and cornflour. Cornflour is as fine as regular flour but yellower. Cornstarch is silky and definitely white. It is apparent to me at least that cornstarch and cornflour are the maize equivalents of wheat starch and wheat flour. They are definitely 2 very different products. Sunday I will be experimenting with both to observe just what differences there are in the cooking arena.

Ras

Date: Sat, 05 Sep 1998 00:08:00 -0400
From: Phil & Susan Troy <troy@asan.com>
Subject: Re: SC - amydown (a new question, I swear!)

kat wrote:

> So the gist of what I have gleaned from this discussion is, amydown is a wheat-based starch with similar properties to modern cornstarch, is used in the same way and produces similar results.

>

> So let's say I wanted to bring my period cooking a step closer to *period* cooking by obtaining some amydown. Can I actually purchase this somewhere under some name or other; or do I actually (gasp) have to make it myself?

You could make it yourself, if you really wanted to, but the easiest thing

to do is buy a bag of wheat starch from a Chinese grocery store. You'll find it on the shelf along with rice flour, tapioca starch, arrowroot, water chestnut flour, etc. It usually comes in a one-pound paper sack wrapped in plastic, or a double thickness of plastic bag.

There are still Chinese groceries that do mail order, aren't there? I know many Chinese cookbooks used to have lists of these, with their addresses, in the back. Bet there is some place on the Web where you can buy the stuff, too.

Adamantius



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